The Story of the Uniform Lessons

By

Dr. John R. Sampey

and

Dr. Ira M. Price

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The Story of the Uniform Lessons

BY

Dr. John R. Sampey
and
Dr. Ira M. Price

With Chapters on the Uniform Lessons in the Present-day Sunday-school

BY

David R. Piper

DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING COMPANY,
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FOREWORD.

THIS little book is the result of a widespread demand for a brief, popularly written, and reliable account of the Uniform Lesson System and the part it has played in the great world-wide Sunday-school movement.

The authoritativeness of this study is vouched for by the authorship of the various chapters. Two chapters are contributed by Dr. John R. Sampey, who for thirty-five years has been a member of the International Lesson Committee, and for many years past has been, as he still is, the chairman of the Uniform Lesson sub-committee. Another chapter is by Dr. Ira M. Price who was for more than twenty years a member of the International Lesson Committee, and for many years its secretary. David R. Piper, who writes the chapters explaining the pedagogical and practical advantages of the Uniform Lessons, is qualified by his experience as a practical lesson writer and editor of lesson materials.

The story of Sunday-school progress in the past is so completely identified with the story of the Uniform Lessons that the two cannot be separated. To know one is to know the other. The Uniform Lessons have had more to do with shaping Sunday-school history than any other one factor. Those who are not using the Uniform Lessons now will want this little volume for the information it contains and as a means of understanding the Sunday-school as an institution coming down to us out of a glorious past and entering upon a still brighter future.

Those who are using the Uniform Lessons will find these pages especially interesting. It will be a great satisfaction to know, from inside sources, how these lessons are selected, the principles on which the Lesson Committee works, the safe-guards by which it seeks to prepare only that which will meet the needs of the greatest possible number of teachers and pupils in the great Sunday-school army.

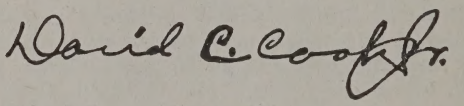
Those who may contemplate a change in lesson ma-

terials for their class or school should read this book as a basis for determining the strong or weak points of the Uniform Lessons, as compared with other types of lesson materials now available.

Pastors will want the book in their libraries for reference when advising with their Sunday-school officers and teachers.

Workers who are already familiar with the history of the Sunday-school movement, and of the Uniform Lessons, will find that the facts are here presented in such condensed, concise, and yet comprehensive form, as to make this a valuable addition to their libraries.

A great many teachers' and workers' conferences could not do better than to spend a number of monthly sessions on the Uniform Lesson System, using the various chapters of this little treatise as a basis for study and discussion. To know the inside facts about the making of the lesson courses, alone, would add greatly to the personal efficiency of any teacher or officer.



President and Editor-in-chief of the David C. Cook Publishing Company.

CHAPTER I.

Beginnings of the Modern Sunday School.

By Dr. John R. Sampey.

Chairman of the International Uniform Lesson Committee.

Robert Raikes and His Associates.

The modern Sunday-school can be traced back to Robert Raikes, Editor of the *Gloucester Journal,* who opened his first school for poor and ragged boys from the streets and alleys of his native town in Sooty Alley, Gloucester, England, in July 1780. Mr. Raikes, writing on June 5, 1784, gives the following "account of the Sunday Charity Schools, lately begun in various parts of England:

"I have not had leisure to give the public an earlier account of my plan for a reform of the rising generation, by establishing schools, where poor children may be received upon the Sunday, and there engaged in learning to read, and to repeat the Catechism, or anything else that may be deemed proper to open their minds to a knowledge of their duty to God, their neighbors and themselves.

"The utility of an establishment of this sort was first suggested by a group of little miserable wretches, whom I observed one day in the street, where many people employed in the pin manufactory, reside. I was expressing my concern to one, at their forlorn and neglected state:—and was told, that if I were to pass through that street upon Sundays, it would shock me indeed, to see the crowds of children who were spending that sacred day in noise and riot; to the extreme annoyance of all decent people.

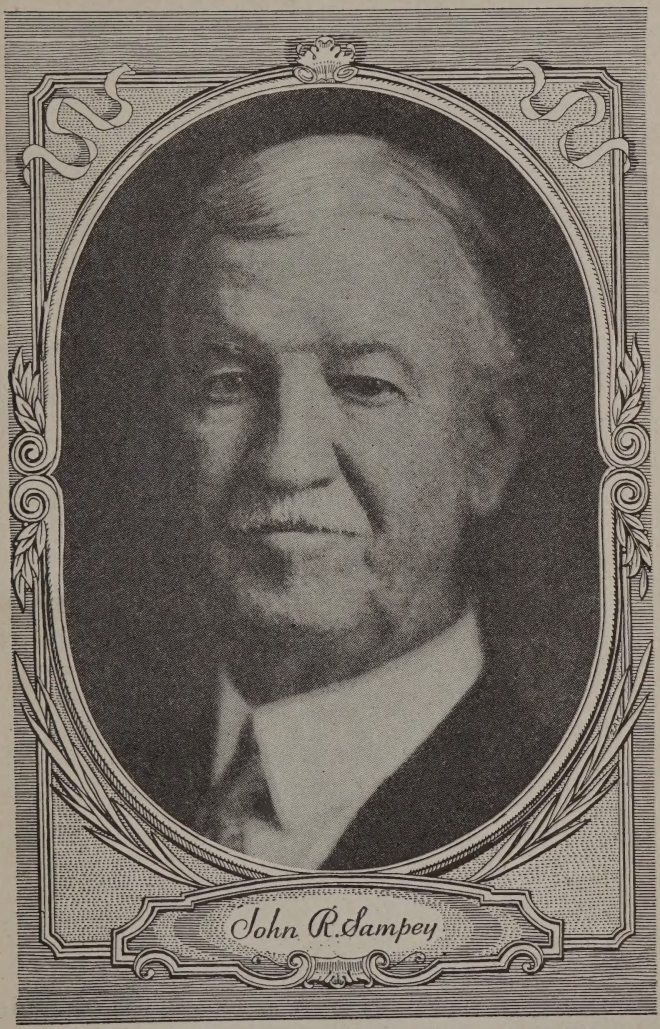
"I immediately determined to make some little effort to remedy the evil. Having found four persons who had been accustomed to instruct chil-

dren in reading, I engaged to pay the sum they required for receiving and instructing such children as I should send to them every Sunday. The children were to come soon after ten in the morning, and stay till twelve: they were then to go home and return at one; and after reading a lesson they were to be conducted to church. After church they were to be employed in repeating the Catechism till half after five, and then to be dismissed, with an injunction to go home without making a noise; and by no means to play in the street. This was the general outline of the regulation.—With regard to the parents, I went round to remonstrate with them on the melancholy consequences that must ensue from so fatal a neglect of their children's morals.—They alleged, that their poverty rendered them incapable of cleaning and clothing their children fit to appear either at school or at church; but this objection was obviated by a remark, that if they were clad in a garb fit to appear in the streets, I should not think it improper for a school calculated to admit the poorest and most neglected; all that I required, were clean faces, clean hands, and their hair combed. In other respects they were to come as their circumstances would permit.

"In a little time the people perceived the advantage. Many children began to show talents for learning, and a desire to be taught. Little rewards were distributed among the most diligent. This excited an emulation.—One or two Clergymen gave their assistance, by going round to the schools on the Sunday afternoon, to hear the children their Catechism. This was of great consequence.

"Another Clergyman hears them their Catechism once a quarter publicly in the church, and rewards their good behaviour with some little gratuity.

"They are frequently admonished to refrain from swearing; and certain boys, who are distinguished by their decent behaviour, are appointed to superintend the conduct of the rest, and make report of all that swear, call names, etc. When quarrels have arisen, the aggressor is compelled


John R. Sampey

to ask pardon, and the offended is enjoined to forgive.—The happiness that must arise to all, from a kind, good-natured behaviour, is often inculcated.

"This mode of treatment has produced a wonderful change in the manners of these little savages. I cannot give a more striking instance than I received the other day from Mr. Church, a manufacturer of hemp and flax, who employs numbers of these children—I asked him whether he perceived any alteration in them, since they had been restrained from their former prostitution of the Lord's day. 'Sir,' said he, 'the change could not have been more extraordinary, had they been transformed from the shape of wolves and tigers to that of men. In temper, disposition, and manners, they could hardly be said to differ from the Brute Creation. But since the establishment of the Sunday-schools, they have shown that they are not the ignorant creatures that they were before. When they have seen a superior come, and kindly instruct and admonish them, and sometimes reward their good behaviour, they are anxious to gain his friendship and good opinion. They are also more tractable and obedient, and less quarrelsome and revengeful.'

"From this little sketch of the reformation which has taken place, there is reason to hope, that a general establishment of Sunday-schools, would in time make some change in the morals of the lower class. At least it might in some measure prevent them from growing worse, which at present seems too apparent.

"P. S. . . . The parish of St. Nicholas has lately established two schools; and some gentlemen of this city have also set up others. To some of the school-mistresses I give two shillings a week extra to take the children when they come from work, during the week days."

Rapid Growth of Sunday Schools.

Robert Raikes was a reformer and philanthropist. He gave himself heartily to the work of elevating the

moral and religious condition of the children of the poor. By 1787 Mr. Raikes estimated the number of children in Sunday-schools at 250,000. Evidently the Sunday-schools ministered to a great need and appealed to the benevolence of Christian men and women. The immediate objective of Robert Raikes and those who associated themselves with his movement was to teach children to read in order that they might study the Scriptures for themselves. The catechism formed part of the course of study in these early schools, and Bibles and Testaments were placed in the hands of pupils as soon as they could read them. Of course there were many by-products of the movement. Children were taught neatness, politeness, kindness, and the habit of attending public worship. The women who were engaged to teach in the schools were paid a shilling or more for giving instruction from five to seven hours per Sunday. Of course only poor children attended these early charity schools, and boys and girls were taught in separate houses by different teachers.

One of the leading promoters of Sunday-schools in Great Britain was William Fox, a London merchant who had a longing that every poor person might be able to read the Bible. He sought to enlist Parliament in the effort to promote popular education, and when this plan failed, he founded the Sunday School Society September 7, 1785. Within twenty years the Sunday School Society had established and assisted 2,542 schools, containing 226,945 pupils. They had donated many spelling books and Bibles. In his "History of the English People," John Richard Green says: "The Sunday-schools established by Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, at the close of the century were the beginnings of popular education." It is difficult for us in these days of universal popular education to conceive of the illiteracy in England in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century. Until 1870, free public education of the type with which we in America are familiar was unknown in England.

Robert Raikes

It was only a few years after 1780 before teachers volunteered their services without pay in many Sunday-schools. The movement in favor of unpaid teachers was promoted by Mr. Wesley and his co-laborers, but William Brodie Gurney, a consecrated Baptist layman, became the apostle of the movement.

The demand for the Scriptures for the use of pupils in the Sunday-schools was the occasion of the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. The Sunday-school movement has greatly promoted the dissemination of the Bible throughout its history.

Through the influence of Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, North Wales, schools were set up for teaching adults how to read. Writing on January 4, 1814, Mr. Charles says: "In one country, after a public address had been delivered to them on that subject, the adult poor, even the aged, flocked to Sunday-schools in crowds; and the shopkeepers could not immediately supply them with an adequate number of spectacles. Our schools, in general, are kept in our chapels; in some districts, where there are no chapels, farmers, in the summer time, lend their barns. The adults and children are sometimes in the same room, but placed in a different part of it. When their attention is gained and fixed, they soon learn; their age makes no difference, if they are able by the help of glasses to see the letters. As the adults have no time to lose, we endeavor before they can read to instruct them without delay in the first principles of Christianity." A pathetic story is recorded by Mr. Power in *"The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools":* "At Glancavie on one of the islands of Scotland, it is said the people flocked in crowds to the schools. An old soldier named Iverich, one hundred and seventeen years old, says he entered the army in 1715, and the Sunday-school in 1815. After learning the alphabet, and to connect monosyllables, his sight failed, and he could go no further."

Sunday-schools began to be organized in America shortly after Mr. Raikes started the movement in Eng-

land. From about 1786 onward Sunday-schools began to appear in different parts of our country. The First-day or Sunday School Society was founded in Philadelphia on January 11, 1791. Its purpose was the education of poor children and their moral improvement. Teachers were paid for their services in the schools under the care of the Society.

The Sunday School Teaching Religion.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century in America religious instruction became the chief objective in the Sunday-school. While in many places the spelling book was still employed, the chief emphasis came to be placed on the study of the Bible. Teachers began to make it their aim to lead their scholars to acceptance of Christ as their Saviour. Revivals of religion sometimes broke out in the Sunday-schools.

In many of these schools the chief task was the repetition of Scripture verses by the pupils. The recitation period was largely given up to memoriter work, and children would sometimes repeat whole chapters at one time. Of course catechisms were employed in many schools, but there was no study of carefully selected portions of Scripture in these early schools.

Early Lesson Courses.

About 1823 there began a movement in favor of selected lessons. Early in 1824 a scheme of limited and uniform lessons was adopted by two schools in the city of New York. The lessons consisted of selections from the Gospels in chronological order. The New York Association of Sunday School Teachers on January 1, 1825, commenced a series of selected lessons for the four following months. In March, 1825, the American Sunday School Union published a list of forty-nine lessons for one year. This list was carefully revised and was widely used from May, 1826 to May, 1827. The promoters of this new lesson system evidently intended that it should be a uniform series to be used by pupils of every age. The New York

Sunday School Union Society expressed the hope "that this plan will very soon be so systematized that every school may be furnished with the same lesson—that thus every teacher and every scholar may be occupied upon the same subject at the very same time."

In 1827 a more ambitious scheme of selected lessons, covering five years, was announced by the American Sunday School Union. These lessons included the life and miracles of Jesus for the first year, the teaching of Jesus for the second year, selections from the Epistles and Revelation for the third year, interesting biographies from the Old Testament for the fourth year, while the fifth year was to be devoted to a study of the prophecies. The new type of Sunday-school lesson became exceedingly popular. There was now more real study for the Bible in the Sunday-school. Helps for teachers were also prepared, but there was no adequate provision for the needs of the pupils. Quarterlies for pupils, explaining and illustrating the lessons, had not yet arrived. Notwithstanding the failure to provide suitable helps for the pupils, new interest in the Sunday-school was kindled by this more systematic method of Bible study.

About 1831 the "Verse-a-Day Scheme" was projected and soon made great inroads upon the "selected lesson" series. On this plan the pupil would require eighty-five years for the completion of his first survey of the Bible. If a pupil should enter the school and begin with the first verse of Genesis he would be an old man before he would come to the story of the life of Jesus. The popularity of this scheme for a while was perhaps due to the fact that on January 17, 1831 the scheme began with the first verse of the eleventh chapter of John. Naturally there was abundance of rich material for both teacher and pupil in the Gospel of John and in the Acts of the Apostles. The undue extension of the "Selected Lesson" system to nine or more years for the completion of its cycle of Bible study also tended to reduce the popularity of the selected lessons. Thus this early uniform system grad-

ually lost its hold upon American Sunday-schools.

For about forty years the so-called "Babel Series" prevailed. Denominational publishers began to issue separate series, so that it was impossible for the visitor in passing from one school to another to know what Scripture lesson he would encounter. There was little concert of action among the Sunday-school workers of that period. Wise leadership in the First National Sunday School Convention in 1832 might have brought the Sunday-school forces to the early adoption of a common lesson for all denominations throughout America. It was a serious mistake to attempt a second convention within seven months from the adjournment of the first. The comparative failure of the Second National Convention in 1833 so discouraged Sunday-school leaders that a period of twenty-six years passed by before the advent of the Third National Convention.

In Great Britain, about 1838 to 1840, lesson lists were issued which led to connected study of the life of Christ, the Acts of the Apostles and the Old Testament history. Helps for teachers were prepared, but there were no helps for the pupils. From 1842 on, the lists of the Sunday School Union were uniform in the Intermediate, Senior, and Adult departments of the schools which followed the series issued by the Union. Uniformity was extended downward to the elementary classes in the year 1855. It is well for us to bear in mind that a lesson quite similiar to the Uniform Lessons authorized in 1872 by the Indianapolis Convention was already in use in England as early as 1855. There was, however, no common uniform system in Great Britain at that time. Rival lesson lists were issued by other societies and by denominational publishers. The Christian world had to wait a long time for the advent of selected lessons on which the various denominations of evangelical Christians could unite.

CHAPTER II.

The Story of the Uniform Lessons.

By Dr. John R. Sampey.

Influence of Bishop John H. Vincent.

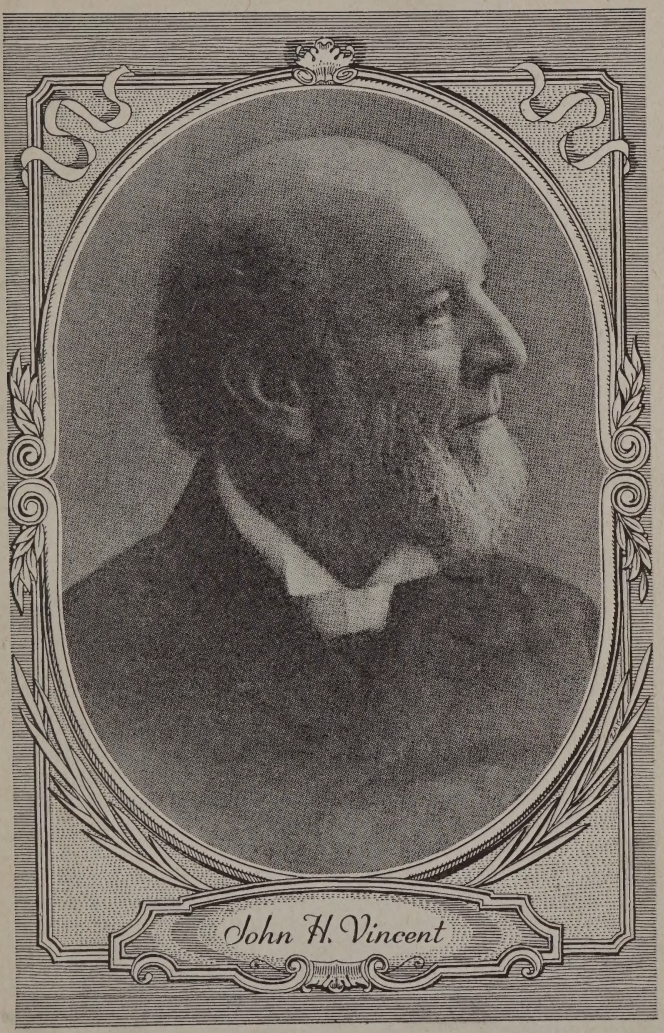
If we seek the founders of the Uniform Lesson System, we shall discover that two men had more to do with the genesis and the development of the Uniform Lessons than all other persons combined. These men were John H. Vincent and B. F. Jacobs. There is space for only a brief study of these great leaders.

John Heyl Vincent, born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, February 23, 1832, was brought up in Pennsylvania. His parents were of Huguenot stock, as were the ancestors of his colleague, Benjamin Franklin Jacobs. Mr. Vincent's father trained his boy in correct speech. Young Vincent was led into Christian work early in life, and so did not have the advantage of a college education. To compensate for this lack, he read widely, studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and sought to make himself familiar with all that college men studied, and thus put himself in possession of all that could be obtained by self-education. Later on, as the founder of the Chautauqua movement, he induced many men and women to read in English translations the great works of ancient and of modern literature, thus enlarging their horizon and putting them into intellectual sympathy with persons trained in the best colleges and universities.

When he was about sixteen years of age young Vincent attended a school in which the teacher taught geography by singing it. Later on as a young pastor at Irvington, New Jersey, he organized his first Palestine party and invented a plan for singing and chanting Biblical geography. He admitted to his class persons of all ages and under his magnetic leadership lit-

tle girls and their grandmothers united in singing and chanting the sacred geography. It would be a mistake to infer that the young preacher was doing superficial work; for he devised a system of lessons which required minute and accurate acquaintance with the facts and teachings of the Scriptures. These early years of enthusiastic teaching served as an apprenticeship in pedagogy and the study of the Bible which prepared Mr. Vincent for the great tasks of his mature years. In 1857 Mr. Vincent organized in his church at Joliet, Illinois, the first Sunday School Normal Class, and he seems to have been the first to suggest Teachers' Institutes for Sunday-school workers. These training schools for Sunday-school teachers did much to prepare the way for the acceptance of a common uniform lesson on the part of Sunday-school leaders a dozen years later.

In 1865 Mr. Vincent became the founder and editor of *The Sunday School Teachers' Quarterly,* which became a monthly magazine in 1866 and was called *The Sunday School Teacher.* In the fall of 1865 Mr. Vincent, in an institute conducted by the Chicago Sunday School Union, discussed the following significant question: "Is it practicable to introduce a uniform system of lessons into all our schools?" Mr. Vincent prepared in 1866 a course of uniform lessons entitled, "Two Years with Jesus: A New System of Sunday School Study." Having been elected as head of the Sunday School Department of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with headquarters in New York, Mr. Vincent resigned as editor of *The Sunday School Teacher* after only four months' service. Rev. Edward Eggleston succeeded to the work in Chicago and made *The National Sunday School Teacher* immensely popular, with a circulation of 35,000 copies, the Scholar's Lesson Paper attaining a circulation of more than 350,000. Mr. Vincent soon founded in New York the Berean Series, which became the chief competitor of the National Series edited by Mr. Eggleston. Mr. Vincent, in his Berean Series, kept on issuing courses of lessons that were well selected for use by


John H. Vincent

pupils of all ages. Here was a type of lesson which might be used in Sunday-schools everywhere.

Mr. B. F. Jacobs Champions the Uniform System.

Benjamin Franklin Jacobs was born at Paterson, New Jersey, September 18, 1834. In his twentieth year he moved to Chicago, and was soon very active in Sunday-school work. For more than forty-five years he served as superintendent of various Sunday-schools. In 1868 he was made president of the Illinois Sunday School Convention, and in 1869 was one of the three secretaries of the Fourth National Sunday School Convention. He was intensely earnest as a personal worker and won many to accept Christ as their Saviour. In 1881 he became chairman of the International Sunday School Executive Committee, an office which he filled with signal ability until his death in 1902. He was one of the leading figures of the World's first Sunday School Convention, in London, in 1889, and he was made President of the World's Second Sunday School Convention, in St. Louis, in 1893. He was the moving spirit in every session of the International Sunday School Convention from 1872 to 1899. He served on the International Lesson Committee for thirty years. Mr. Jacobs moved men profoundly by his tender and inspiring addresses, whether in the committee room or before great popular audiences.

It was this virile young man, engaged in practical Sunday-school work, who caught the vision of a uniform lesson for all the schools of the continent. Rev. Simeon Gilbert, who knew Mr. Jacobs well and saw him in action frequently, regarded the adoption of the Uniform Lesson System at the Indianapolis Convention as very largely Mr. Jacobs' "personal achievement—brought about, under God, as the result of a conviction felt in the bones, burning in the heart, tense as a bowstring on every fiber of the brain: carried out by dint of a determination dead in earnest, in insistence and in persistence as resolute as the centripetal law of gravity; a tact and skill that knew when to push and when

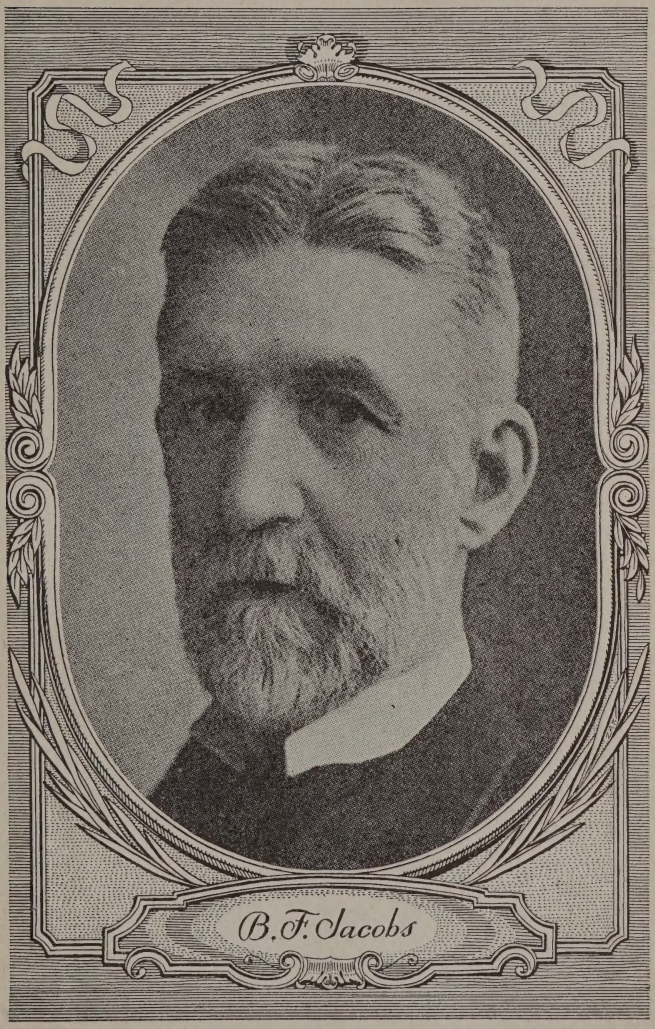
to strike; how to poise the hand and withhold the blow that might fail by being premature or untimely; how to state, argue, plead, in private and in public, at home and away from home."

From 1867 to 1872 Mr. Jacobs seized every opportunity to present the advantages of a system of uniform lessons. He advocated one lesson for the whole school, and insisted that this lesson would be good for all the schools of the country. He promoted the adoption of the lessons put forth by Edward Eggleston in *The National Sunday School Teacher.* He spoke in favor of uniform lessons before various state conventions of Sunday-school workers. In every way possible he promoted the view that a uniform lesson would be best for every school, and that it would be practicable to unite all the schools of our whole country upon one and the same series.

Edward Eggletson, who did not really believe in the principle of uniformity, characterized the scheme of Mr. Jacobs as a dream of his enthusiastic friend. As time went on, Dr. Eggleston began to hope that all Sunday-school publishers might accept the lesson lists of *The National Sunday School Teacher.* He declined to seek union by calling in the services of a committee. He insisted that his list should be accepted by all. It was the refusal of the publishers of *The National Sunday School Teacher* to unite on any other condition than the acceptance of the "National Series" of lessons, that retarded the adoption of a common uniform lesson for two or three years.

Uniform Lessons Adopted.

In 1871 Mr. Jacobs presented to the Executive Committee, in session to arrange for the Indianapolis Convention of 1872, the subject of uniform lessons, and finding that most of the committee favored it, a meeting of publishers was called for August 8. At this meeting it was decided, by a vote of twenty-six to three, to appoint a committee to select a list of lessons for 1872. Drs. Eggleston, Vincent and Newton, Rev.


B. F. Jacobs

H. C. McCook, and Mr. Jacobs constituted the committee. We allow Mr. Gilbert to describe what took place after the adjournment of the publishers and their representatives: "It was then past three o'clock, and Dr. Vincent insisted that the outline of the scheme must be formed that day. Dr. Newton said he was obliged to leave the city that afternoon. Mr. Jacobs was also obliged to leave, but said he would return the next morning. But as the other members of the committee insisted that the lessons must be selected that day, if at all, these two brethren agreed that the other members of the committee might begin the work of selecting the lessons. The three members of the committee held a meeting, and, after a brief consultation, agreed to disagree and publish the following card, which was printed that afternoon:

> "*Uniform Lessons—the Failure.*—The undersigned, having been appointed at the conference held at the call of the National Executive Committee, a committee to select a course of lessons for the whole Sunday-school public, find it impossible at this late day to select a list of subjects acceptable to all, or creditable enough to put the experiment on a fair basis. The compromise necessary to effect a union at this moment renders it out of the question to get a good list, and with the most entire unanimity we agree that it is best to defer action until the matter shall have been discussed in the National Convention."

Six copies of this card were mailed at once to different papers for publication, with the signatures of Edward Eggleston, J. H. Vincent and Henry C. McCook. Mr. Jacobs received a telegram that night that the committee had decided not to select a list of lessons, and that Dr. Vincent had gone home to Plainfield. He at once telegraphed Dr. Vincent to meet him in New York the next morning. Mr. Jacobs succeeded in convincing Dr. Vincent that the committee ought to do the work for which it was appointed. The committee decided to take two quarters lessons from the National Series, one quarter from the Berean Series and to make

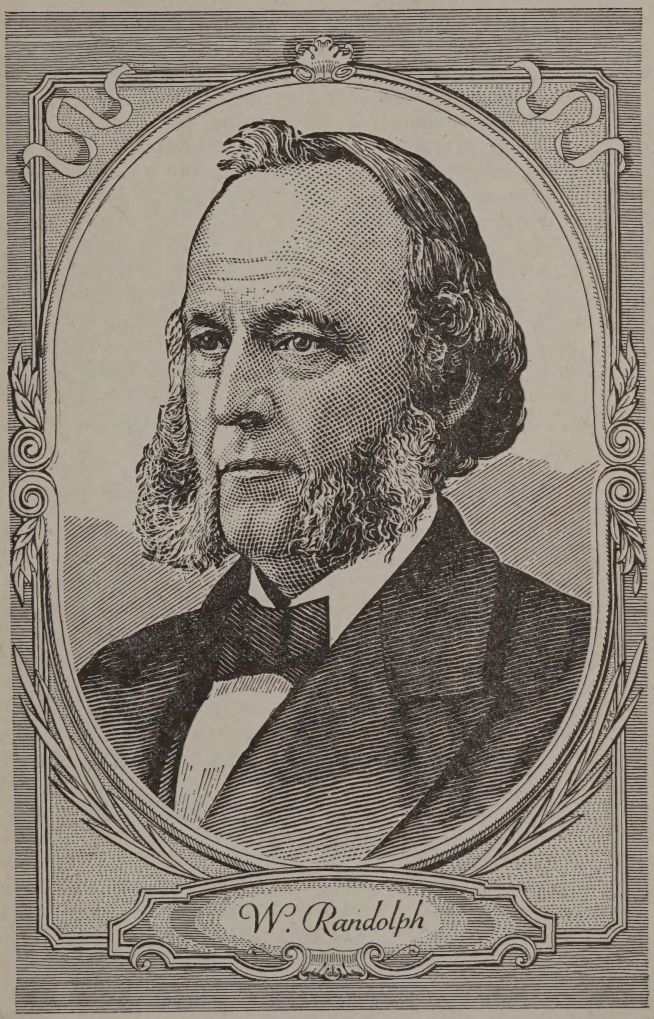
up themselves one quarter of new lessons. This list of lessons was widely adopted throughout the United States, and had been in actual use more than three months prior to the meeting of the Indianapolis Convention. At this Convention Mr. Jacobs made an eloquent address in favor of the Uniform System, and at the close of his address submitted the following resolution:

> "*Resolved,* That this Convention appoint a committee to consist of five clergymen and five laymen, to select a course of Bible Lessons for a series of years not exceeding seven, which shall, as far as they may decide possible, embrace a general study of the whole Bible, alternating between the Old and New Testaments semi-annually or quarterly, as they shall deem best, and to publish a list of such lessons as fully as possible, and at least for the two years next ensuing, as early as the 1st of August, 1872; and that this Convention recommend their adoption by the Sunday-schools of the whole country; and that this committee have full power to fill any vacancies that may occur in their number by reason of the inability of any member to serve."

This resolution was adopted by an overwhelming vote, only ten delegates voting in the negative. The method of Bible study thus adopted on Thursday, April 18, 1872, won the approval of the overwhelming majority of Protestant Sunday-schools through the world, and has maintained its place in thousands of schools to the present hour.

The First Lesson Committee.

The first International Lesson Committee was composed of five clergymen and five laymen, as follows: Ministers—Drs. J. H. Vincent, John Hall, Warren Randolph, Richard Newton, and A. L. Chapin; laymen—Philip G. Gillett, George H. Stuart, B. F. Jacobs, Alex. G. Tyng, and Henry P. Haven. Dr. Vincent was elected chairman and Rev. Warren Randolph was chosen as secretary. These gentlemen remained in office for twenty-four years.


W. Randolph

The members of the First Lesson Committee were under the necessity of paying their own traveling expenses and hotel bills. The amount thus contributed during six years was not less than $3,000. In their report to the International Convention of 1878, they said: "The money we have thus given, together with our work, is our cheerful contribution to the cause." The traveling expenses and hotel bills of members of the Lesson Committee from 1878 to the present time have been provided by others; but they have given their services without any financial compensation. It has been the writer's privilege to serve on the International Lesson Committee for almost thirty-five years, and the service has been throughout a labor of love. There have been rich rewards in the personal friendships formed and in the rich spiritual fellowship of the meetings of the Committee.

Rapid Growth of the Uniform Lessons.

On concluding its first three years of work, the Lesson Committee reported: "The extent to which our work is already carried, far surpasses the most sanguine expectations. These lessons are largely in use throughout our own land by Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, Friends, members of the Reformed Churches, Adventists, and many others,—a mighty host, to be enumerated only by millions. Each of these denominations has established Sunday-school periodicals, large parts of which are devoted to the exposition of the lessons. In addition to these, private enterprise has established many more. The weekly religious press, of almost all denominations, in every issue expounds the same, and in some instances secular papers are doing it, while the teaching of the lesson for the following day has become the Saturday feature of the noon-day prayer-meetings all over the land. Thus our lessons have found their way to the Sunday-schools along the shores of the Atlantic, down the slopes of the Pacific, and through all the region

which lies between. East and West and North and South have come to love and use them.

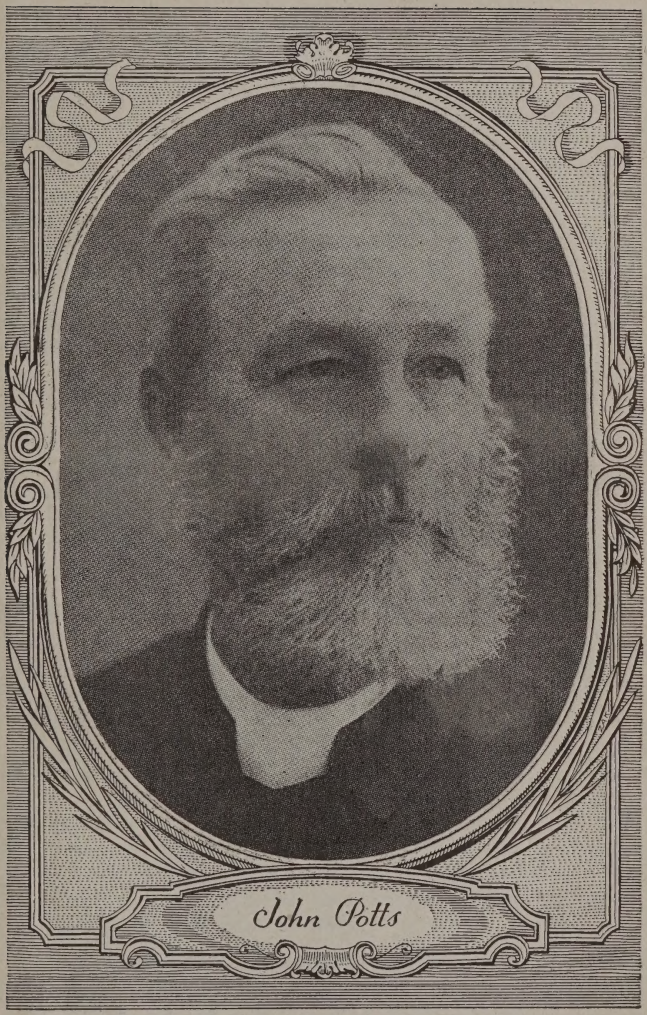
"But this is not all. Our work will help to unify the nations. The tidal wave is already rolling along the shores of Continental Europe. The ground swell is felt in Asia, and even in the regions that are beyond. Our lessons are today in use in France and Germany, in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy and Greece; in Syria, Hindustan, India, Burmah, and China. Old Mexico is sitting down with us to the study of these Scriptures. The isles, too, wait for God's Law. Australia, New Zealand, and the Sandwich Islands have clasped hands with us across the intervening waters, and it is literally true, that one set of Sabbath studies is going with the sun around the globe."

The number of persons using the Uniform Lessons grew from year to year until by 1890 they numbered at least ten million souls. By 1902 the number had increased to more than fifteen million, and by 1905 to seventeen million. There has been no other coöperative movement for the study of the Bible equal to this.

Some Improvements in the Lesson System.

The lesson selections were at first very brief, and the titles were also simple and brief. Golden Texts were first introduced in 1874. The Sunday School Union of London decided to use in their afternoon schools the lessons issued by the American Committee. From 1874 until 1914 the lesson lists for each year were submitted to the British Committee for criticism and improvement.

The work of the Second Lesson Committee, which was appointed in Atlanta in 1878, shows a marked improvement over that of the First Committee. The members who were retained from the First Committee had learned much by experience, and some of the new members were exceptionally strong men. Perhaps the two who made the largest contribution to the work of the Lesson Committee were Dr. John A.


John Potts

Broadus and Rev. John Potts. Dr. Broadus was at once recognized by his colleagues as a great scholar and a wise man. Bishop Vincent says of him: "He was a ripe scholar, perfect in his familiarity with the Bible; amiable, cordial. He gave his whole personality to the work in hand at the time." Bishop Vincent describes Dr. Potts as "a man robust and royal in bearing, well educated, a practical man who knew folks, having had large experience in preaching among the people." Dr. Potts was chairman of the Lesson Committee from 1896 until his death in 1907. In addition to selecting a passage for study, with a title for the lesson, and a Golden Text, the Second Lesson Committee also indicated memory verses. The Committee took a step forward in 1882 by devoting the entire year to the study of the Gospel of Mark.

Among the able men added to the Third Lesson Committee, one of the most useful was Rev. A. E. Dunning, D.D., who served on the Lesson Committee for eighteen years, and was promoted to the office of Secretary from 1896 to 1902. Bishop Vincent thus pictures Dr. Dunning: "A Yankee in his aggressiveness; a genial, cordial spirit; bright, well educated, vivacious, keen, clear-headed." The third cycle of lessons (1887 to 1893) was a distinct improvement over those which had preceded it. It included a year of consecutive study in Matthew and a similar period of consecutive study in Luke.

From January, 1873, to December, 1893, the Uniform Lesson System covered the entire Bible three times, in cycles of seven years each. From 1894 to 1917 there were four cycles of six years each, followed by a cycle of eight years (1918-1925), when the Committee returned to a six-year cycle (1926-1931). The Educational Commission has tentatively adopted a five-year cycle for 1932 to 1936.

The Fourth Lesson Committee indicated connected and parallel readings, along with Scripture passages, titles, Golden Texts and memory verses, hoping in this way to show the historical connection between lessons

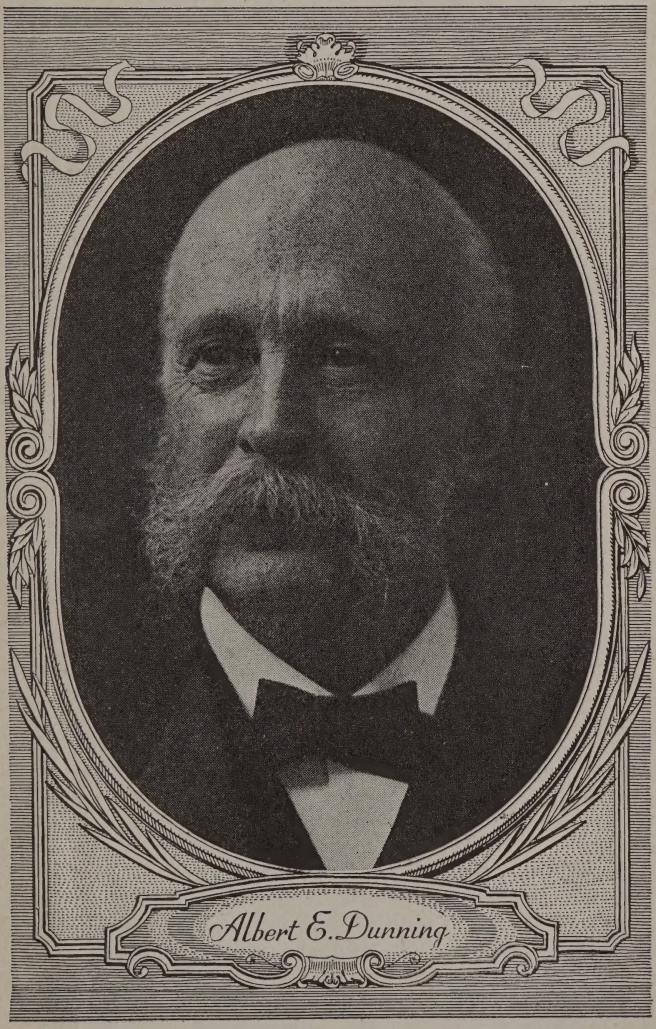
and to obtain a more complete view of the book or period under consideration. Consecutive Bible study made great progress under the direction of the Fourth Lesson Committee.

Among the outstanding men added to the Committee in 1896 were Principal E. I. Rexford and Rev. A. F. Schauffler, D.D. The writer of this historical sketch had been appointed by the Lesson Committee in October, 1895, as the successor of Dr. John A. Broadus. Under the leadership of Dr. A. F. Schauffler the Fifth Lesson Committee emphasized the biographical feature in Bible study. It was voted to give a year and a half to the continuous study of the life of Christ after the fashion of a harmony of the Gospels.

On April 17, 1901, in New York, a group of Sunday-school editors, publishers and lesson writers came together and formed the Editorial Association, a body of experts and leaders who influenced profoundly the work of the Lesson Committee from that time forward. At their suggestion, a committee was appointed to prepare a Beginners Course for one year and another committee to prepare an Advanced Course of two years. At the Denver Convention, in 1902, the Lesson Committee was authorized to issue an optional Beginners Course, but was forbidden to issue Advanced Lessons.

Professor Ira M. Price, Ph.D., was a notable addition to the personnel of the Sixth Lesson Committee. Dr. Price is an able Semitic scholar and an expert teacher. Methodical, diligent, courteous and affable, he at once took a place of leadership in the work of the Committee. In 1908 he became Secretary of the Lesson Committee, an office which he filled with eminent satisfaction to his colleagues for more than twenty years. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of his services to the Sunday-school world.

The cycle of Uniform Lessons from 1906 to 1911 was noted for long consecutive courses, each year with the exception of 1908 being devoted to consecutive study in either the Old or New Testament. A high



Albert E. Dunning

standard of scholarship is evident in the formation of the cycle and its development, but some of the courses perhaps grew rather tedious to the average pupil and teacher.

In the summer of 1907 an important conference between the British and American Sections of the Lesson Committee was held in the city of London. It was voted at this conference that the British Section be requested to prepare a general scheme for the lessons for 1912 to 1917, and a detailed list of the lessons for 1912. It was also agreed that the Uniform Lessons should be selected with special reference to the needs of pupils from nine to fifteen years of age. It was understood that Primary and Advanced Lessons could be prepared by the American and British Sections acting jointly or independently. If this agreement had been carried out fully, uniformity for the whole school would have been given up.

The Advent of Graded Lessons.

At this same period the agitation in favor of a closely graded series was at its height in America. The advocates of Graded Lessons in the United States preferred to make no use of Uniform Lessons for pupils other than adults. It was decided to let the two series of lessons be issued without any effort to fit one into the other.

The way was prepared for the issuance of two widely different types of lessons for American Sunday-schools by the Boston Conference, held in the home of Mr. W. N. Hartshorn, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Association, on January 2, 1908. After earnest discussion for two days, the following resolution was unanimously passed: " (1) That the system of a general lesson for the whole school, which has been in successful use for thirty-five years, is still the most practicable and effective system for the great majority of the Sunday-schools of North America. Because of its past accomplishments, its present usefulness, and its future possibilities, we recommend its continuance and its fullest development.

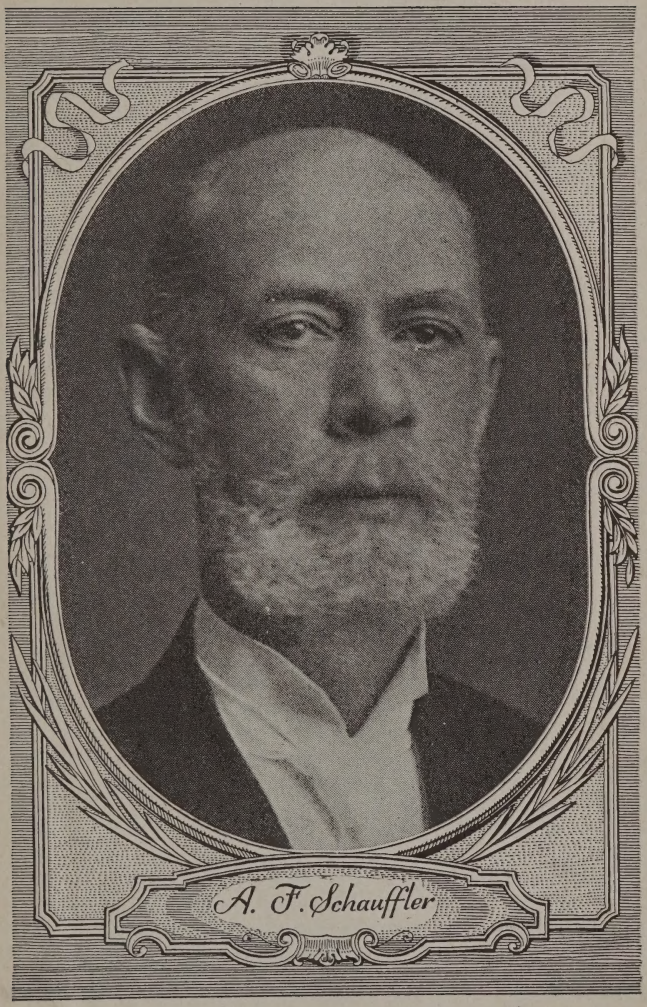
(2) That the need for a graded system of lessons is expressed by so many Sunday-schools and workers that it should be adequately met by the International Sunday School Association, and that the Lesson Committee should be instructed by the next International Convention, to be held in Louisville, Kentucky, June 18-23, 1908, to continue the preparation of a thoroughly graded course covering the entire range of the Sunday-school."

Each series could then stand on its own merits. At the Louisville Convention, in 1908, it was voted that a closely graded series be prepared for pupils from four to twenty-one years of age. During the years from 1908 to 1914 the Lesson Committee, with the invaluable assistance of the Graded Lesson Conference, prepared and issued courses for sixteen years of consecutive study.

Since the completion of the Closely Graded Series in 1916, the Lesson Committee has made no further revision of these lessons, but voted to give them over to the various denominations for such revision as they might be pleased to make. These lessons are used by many schools in all parts of the United States.

The Uniform Lessons Under Fire.

The friends of Uniform Lessons were disturbed in 1914, by the strong effort to displace Uniform Lessons by a series graded by departments. In order to make the situation clear, we must recount briefly the story of the enlargement of the Lesson Committee in 1914. Prior to that year the Lesson Committee had long consisted of sixteen members, most of whom were ministers of the gospel or professors in theological schools. It was an unwritten law that no man who drew his financial support from editorial work for the Sunday-school could be a member of the International Lesson Committee. With the great development in religious education and the election of expert Sunday-school workers to positions in the denominational publishing houses, the former Editorial Association had been displaced by a Sunday School Council of Evangelical De-


A. F. Schauffler

nominations. This Council contained many men of large vision and wide experience, who saw no reason why they should not have a hand in the selection of lesson courses. Thus it came about that the leaders of the International Sunday School Association were confronted, in 1914, with the demand that the International Lesson Committee should be reconstructed and enlarged. An agreement was made whereby the Lesson Committee should include eight members chosen by the International Association, eight members elected by the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, and one member from each denomination holding membership in the Council. The membership of the Lesson Committee suddenly rose to forty or more. As soon as the new and larger Lesson Committee was organized, an effort was made to displace the historic Uniform Lessons. The present Group Graded Lessons represent the type of lesson with which it was hoped by many to displace the Uniform Series. After much earnest debate, it was voted, in 1915, to issue Uniform Lessons with special adaptations to pupils in the various departments. From 1918 to the present time these lessons have been known as "The Improved Uniform Lessons."

The writer of this sketch has been Chairman of the Improved Uniform Lesson Committee from 1915 to the present, and he takes pleasure in recording the opinion that the series has been made better by the changes introduced in 1915 and the years that have followed. Among the leading members of the Committee are some of the chief editors of denominational publishing houses. These gentlemen not only give their personal attention to the work of the Committee, but also call upon the members of their staff to assist with expert advice. The Improved Uniform Lessons have had extensive use even among the religious bodies which were most definitely committed to the use of Graded Lessons.

The International Lesson Committee, at its meeting December 29, 1920, voted that all its lesson schemes

should be constructed upon the principle of graduation, and that at the earliest possible moment two basic types of Sunday-school lessons be issued, namely, lessons graded by years and lessons graded by age-groups. It was voted that when the new system of Group Lessons should be prepared and approved, the Committee would then proceed to determine the status of the Improved Uniform Lesson System. All this sounded rather ominous for Uniform Lessons; but some who were present kept quiet, in view of the fact that the wide demand for Uniform Lessons would guarantee that such lessons would still be kept in the field.

April 20, 1922, in Pittsburgh, the Lesson Committee released the outline for Primary Group Lessons and Junior Group Lessons for the year 1924. At the same meeting the following action was taken concerning Uniform Lessons:

"(1) That a six-year cycle of Improved Uniform Lessons be authorized, beginning with 1926, with adaptations to Intermediate, Senior, Young People's and Adult departments.

"(2) That the Subcommittee on Improved Uniform Lessons be unrestricted by instructions as to the range and character of material to be selected, in view of the probable desirability that the Uniform Lessons, for some years to come, should be adaptable to the use of Primary and Junior pupils, even though specific adaptations of title and material to these grades are not provided by the Committee.

"(3) That in addition to the separate publication of the Improved Uniform Lessons and the various Group Lessons, the Primary and Junior Group Lessons for 1924, together with the Improved Uniform Lessons for the same year, be published in parallel columns upon one page, under the heading:

"The International Sunday School Lessons
Group-Uniform Series: Courses for 1924."

For some time publishers of the Group Lessons preferred to keep them in close association with the Uni-

form Series. Perhaps this close association disarmed a good deal of criticism of the Group Lessons. There is no longer any occasion for trying to make oil and water mix. The Group Graded Series can stand on its own merits, and the Uniform Series will do likewise. During his long connection with the Lesson Committee the writer has always contended for the principle of freedom. He has insisted that any reasonable demand from a considerable body of the constituency to which the Lesson Committee ministers, should be met and properly cared for. The attempt to force one's preferences upon others is unwise and leads to inevitable conflict.

Contributions of the Uniform Lessons to Bible Study.

Although the Sunday-school movement in America had made great progress from its origin about 1786, it had in it potentialities scarcely dreamed of prior to the adoption of the Uniform Lesson System on April 18, 1872, at the Indianapolis Convention. Mr. Jacobs and a few other forward-looking men with rare vision foresaw the advantages of uniting all Christian workers in the weekly study of a single brief passage of Scripture, selected because it would appeal to all ages and offer valuable teaching material for winning the pupils to Christ and building them up in the Christian life. With the Bible as the one textbook, and well chosen passages of moderate compass for each lesson, it was evident that it would be possible to bring Christians of the various denominational groups to cooperate in the various phases of Sunday-school work. This would offer opportunity for a delightful form of Christian union, without embarrassment to anyone possessing strong religious convictions.

It may well be questioned whether any other type of lesson would have brought together so many millions of American Christians. Nor was this delightful fellowship of Christians of various names and creeds to be limited to North America. It was just as workable in Europe and on the mission fields of the world.

No other single influence has done more to promote coöperation on the part of all evangelical Christians than the adoption and use of a common uniform lesson in the Sunday-schools of this continent. Fears and prejudices were disarmed in the presence of the admirable lessons selected by a group of ministers and laymen representing the leading evangelical denominations. If this same group of ministers and laymen had attempted to construct graded lessons for the various ages, they could not have caught the imagination nor enlisted the sympathy of so many millions of people. The uniform lesson devised by Rev. John H. Vincent and championed by Mr. B. F. Jacobs has made a great contribution to the Christian life of the world.

A lesson prepared for only one age-group could not hope to command space in secular newspapers; in fact, it would probably receive little attention in the weekly religious newspapers. It was reserved for a lesson uniform in all departments and for all ages to catch the attention of newspaper publishers and editors. It would be difficult to estimate the good done by the publication of notes on the Uniform Lessons in hundreds of secular papers, ranging from metropolitan dailies down to the small weekly county paper. The Christian message thus reaches many thousands not yet affiliated with any church or Sunday-school.

Helps for the study of the Bible were demanded by the millions of persons using the common uniform lesson. Authors and publishers could anticipate the lessons a year or two in advance and prepare literature that would meet the needs of both teachers and pupils. As a direct result, many volumes of Bible exposition have been produced as aids to the Sunday-school teachers.

The Uniform Lessons have promoted Bible reading in the home and the community. Some persons have been encouraged to maintain family worship by reason of the fact that well-chosen Bible readings for every day are provided in connection with the Uni-

form Lessons. Bible reading and Bible study have been greatly promoted in connection with the Uniform Lesson System.

Expository preaching received great impetus when the Uniform Lessons were first put forth. Many pastors learned how to make expository sermons by reason of their experience in teaching the Uniform Lessons to large Bible classes. Finding that their church members often received more help from the exposition of the Sunday-school lesson than they did from the Sunday morning sermon, many pastors began to select passages of Scripture of greater length as the basis for their preaching.

A common uniform lesson in use in all the Sunday-schools of a community gave an opportunity for Christian teachers to come together for the study of the lesson for the week under the guidance of the most skilled teacher in the community. The progress of the Sunday-school movement, and the large place the Sunday-school now holds in the thought of church leaders, owe much to the long use of a common uniform lesson by all the ages in all the Sunday-schools. The Uniform Lesson furnished the topic of conversation and a point of common interest in the life of the community.

The Future of the Uniform Lessons.

While no man, apart from the divine inspiration, can safely predict the future, one may venture the opinion that for years to come Uniform Lessons will be widely used in American Sunday-schools. If we had in our Sunday-schools only ideal pupils and ideal teachers, working under ideal conditions, some other type of lesson might take the field; but with conditions as they are, the Uniform Lesson System bids fair to continue to make a large contribution to the spread of Christianity and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER III.

Principles Governing the Selection of the Uniform Lessons.

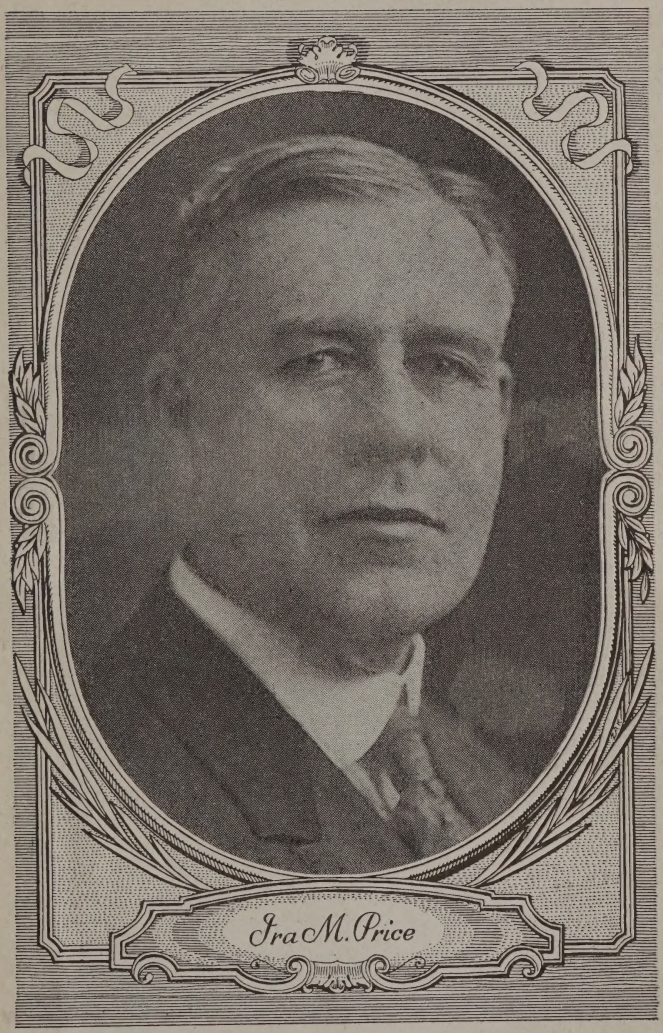
By Ira M. Price.

Member of the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, 1902-1928; *Secretary of the Lesson Committee,* 1908-1928.

The project of Uniform Lessons was the first-born study plan of the International Sunday School Association, organized in 1872. Its first appearance and use began with 1873. It was adopted as the one set of lessons for all the members of the Sunday-school. Each lesson consisted of a title, a passage of about ten to twenty verses from the Bible, either from the Old or the New Testament, and a Golden Text for committal to memory—usually emphasizing one of the main points of the lesson. This was the order for each of forty-eight lessons of the year, broken into four quarters of twelve lessons each, the thirteenth lesson of each quarter being a review of the twelve just studied.

Lesson Courses Cover Bible by Cycles.

The Lesson Committee, in order to cover the Bible within a reasonable period, at first adopted a cycle of seven years, during which lessons were selected from Genesis to Revelation, alternately from the Old Testament and the New Testament for periods of from three months to one year, and in the proportions of about three parts from the Old to five from the New Testament. These were not hard and fast rules but were the general principles on which selections were made from the two sections of the Bible. Another policy was adopted of not allowing a year to pass by without some study of the New Testament, and preferably during the first quarter or half of any given year.


Ira M. Price

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE SELECTION OF THE UNIFORM LESSONS.

Topical Adaptations to Different Age-groups.

The reorganization of the Lesson Committee in 1914, the introduction of new courses of Graded Lessons, and the completion of the seventh cycle of lessons in 1917, opened the door for new modifications. The new features inserted in the lessons for 1918 and thereafter gave to the Uniform course a new name which it still carries: "The Improved Uniform Lessons." The improvements which appeared in the Uniform series of that year were such as specialized progress in lesson construction seemed to demand. In the first place, rigorous uniformity of lesson material for the whole school was not everywhere required. In five cases in 1918 where it seemed necessary to provide more satisfactory lessons for the primary department than those used in the whole school besides, departure from uniformity was introduced and sanctioned. Again, the outlines of the Improved Uniform series provided a list of "Additional Material for Teachers," quite outside the compass of the lesson of the week.

Another entirely new departure of the Committee, designed especially to help the lesson writers, was the printing in the yearly outlines of (1) a Primary Topic, with designation of the Lesson Material, and a Memory Verse; (2) a Junior Topic with a Memory Verse; (3) an Intermediate-Senior Topic; and (4) a Young People's and Adult Topic, sometimes with Additional Material for study. This was in general the character of the brand-new assistance, more or less fully detailed, set before the hard-working lesson-writers of that course of study. And it has prevailed from 1918 down to the present time, except that Primary and Junior topics have been omitted for several years past, these being supplied by the various publishers who issue Uniform Lessons for the Primary and Junior departments.

The Length of the Lesson Texts.

May we now look at some of the modifications that have been made in the length of the lessons in all these years. Originally the specified lessons embraced about ten to twenty verses—a complete paragraph or event. In 1901 an editorial committee of lesson-writers and publishers waited upon the Lesson Committee and earnestly requested that body to cut the lesson assignments to as near twelve verses as possible, in order to fit the size of page of their lesson leaflets. While attempting to do that service the Committee soon found that such a restriction greatly handicapped its work, and that plan was abandoned.

The desire of the Lesson Committee to select lessons with a specific story in full, or a connected line of thought to the end of a paragraph, gradually tempted it to stretch out the lesson assigned beyond the traditional limits of earlier days. Publishers again protested against the physical length of the lessons, and so persistently that the Committee devised another aid to help the cause. Out of a somewhat lengthy passage named as the lesson for the day the verses essential to the title of the lesson were specified as, "print verses so and so," that is, in the lesson helps; but it was understood that the whole passage would be studied for that day's lesson. This method is followed to the present time.

The "Hop, Skip, and Jump" Outcry.

The most persistent cry against the old Uniform series of studying the Bible, was its so-called "hop, skip, and jump" method of going through the whole book in seven years. Of course, the defects of the scheme were instantly conceded, but it was countered in reply that seven years was all too short a time to take up and study in any other way in Sunday-school the sixty-six books of the whole Bible in 336 lessons. Again, there is far too much Bible narrative, taking only one lesson a week, to be covered in any six or seven years' studies.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE SELECTION OF THE UNIFORM LESSONS.

The Lesson Committee very early tackled this problem. As far back as 1882, instead of splitting up that year between the Old and New Testament it took up the Gospel of Mark and split it into forty-eight lessons, and the entire year was devoted to its rich contents. The year 1890 was devoted to the Gospel of Luke, and 1897 to the Acts and the Epistles. In this very year 1930, we find the entire Gospel of Matthew studied in the first six months, and in 1931 the Gospel of Luke is to be covered in the same period of time. Such book studies are a direct challenge to the best talent in the schools to get out of those books the choicest results of concentrated effort. The "hop, skip, and jump" outcry has now about died away in the distance.

The Use of Topical Courses.

Let us not think that the adjustments of new courses of lessons already mentioned settled all the problems before the Lesson Committee, nor that the forty-eight Biblical lessons per year and the reviews satisfied the hungry workers. Appeals were made early in the 'Nineties for a series of topical lessons, with Scripture texts collected from various parts of the Bible. Beginning with 1893, the Lesson Committee has inserted at intervals in almost every cycle a three or six months' course of topical studies. These have included such themes as "Old Testament Teachings" (1893); "Studies in the Christian Life" (1918); "Some Great Teachings of the Bible" (1919); "Social Teachings of the Bible" (1921); "Missionary Messages of the Bible" (1923); and similar themes. The topical courses give teachers and pupils a free-air range that tempts them to browse about in adjoining fields and to do some constructional thinking for themselves. The plan of introducing such topical lay-outs at profitable intervals is a fixed policy of the Committee.

Introduction of Temperance Lessons.

The next difficult and sometimes embarrassing situation was a kind of serious attack on the fixity of the

forty-eight Biblical lessons per year for the school. Very early in the years of the Lesson Committee, in fact, in September, 1875, the first appeal came for a frequent presentation of temperance in the lesson scheme. This was really the opening gun of a bombardment which lasted fifteen years, indeed, until 1890, when an armistice was declared and a treaty agreed upon between B. F. Jacobs of the Lesson Committee and Miss Frances E. Willard of the W. C. T. U. on the floor of the International Sunday School Convention at Pittsburgh in that year. The outcome of the peace negotiations was an agreement practically binding the Lesson Committee henceforth to present at least four temperance lessons within each year. It was not specified that they should be given on any fixed Sundays nor be distributed exactly one in each quarter. But the lesson plan of each calendar year should carry four assignments whose interpretations with some latitude present temperance teachings. Although all the principal parties to the 1890 treaty have gone to their reward, the Lesson Committee still stands by the terms of that agreement. One of those lessons is now, as a result of a pact with the British Lessons Council, the so-called "World's Temperance Sunday," the last Sunday before our November election.

The Easter and Christmas Lessons.

The victory of the temperance workers, widely heralded over the land, encouraged other causes to make similar requests. The fact that the forty-eight yearly Biblical lessons were now cut down to forty-four seems never to have touched their consciences. Among the first appeals was a request from those denominations who observe church days, to recognize in the lessons Easter and Christmas. This reasonable petition was granted by the preparation and issuance in 1892 and since, of optional lessons for Easter and Christmas in addition to the regular course, for the use of those religious bodies who desire to use them. In 1900, on request, another optional lesson was provided for Whitsuntide.

Lessons for Other Special Days.

The concession of the four temperance lessons, and optional lessons for three church days, opened the flood gates for special appeals from numerous good and worthy causes in all the realms of religious, social, and philanthropic reforms. And some went so far as to ask not simply for one, but even for four special lessons in each year. Some of these requests were for lessons on patriotism, peace, international good-will, stewardship, tithes, foreign missions, home missions, mother's day, father's day, children's day, care of the aged, care of orphans, cruelty to animals, and scores of other objects which swept through the whole gamut of the philanthropies.

The Lesson Committee was now driven to be the guardian of the study of the Bible in the Sunday-school as against an army of causes, generally worthy, which would soon have displaced and occupied all the remaining forty-four hours per year left for the study of the Bible. The Committee's predicament and position was presented to the appellants and, as a rule, was accepted with good grace. Concessions were made in the case of a few requests. If in the regular course of lessons selected for the year one was found that could be used, for example, to teach peace, the Committee agreed to insert after the title: " (may be used as a lesson on peace)." This plan did not reduce our full quota of lessons, and partially, at least, satisfied the requests.

How the Lesson Committee Works.

In the earlier years of the Lesson Committee, few outside problems complicated the situation. But as the years went by and the tasks increased, the methods and principles of work had to be readjusted. For some years (and always two years before the lessons were needed), one, two, or three members were appointed to make a preliminary survey, to block out the lessons for a given quarter, half, or whole year,

and to present the results to the full Committee as a definite and specific task. As soon as the Uniform Lessons, the Graded Lessons, and Daily Bible Readings were in the offing, the Lesson Committee was split up into specific subcommittees whose duties were plain and clear. Now, in order to speed up the work, these subcommittees selected a man or men to lay out the lessons or assignments for a given period, and to present such plan to the subcommittee at its next meeting. Upon the reorganization of the International Lesson Committee in 1914, such detailed division of the members of the subcommittees, especially of the Uniform Lessons Committee, was really the only method by which such large subcommittees could have prepared their assignment. When these results were laid before the full subcommittee, the draft was examined in every detail, passed upon by majority vote, and embodied in a formal report made at a later hour to a plenary meeting of the entire Lesson Committee. For the first thirty-five years of the Lesson Committee's work these reports received critical treatment by the whole Lesson Committee. But of late years, the stupendous amount of work on hand at every meeting, and the size and competence of the subcommittees, have rather left the perfecting of details to these subcommittees.

Every lesson plan, after first approval by the plenary Committee, has been printed in proofs and distributed to Sunday-school workers, editors, and publishers who desired them, in this and foreign countries. Upon the return of the proofs with corrections and suggestions, the subcommittee again meets, and carefully goes over the entire year's scheme, perfects it, and receives final approval thereof by the full Lesson Committee. In short, these lessons first selected, worked out in detail, submitted to the public, are again worked over and approved by the entire Committee, before being offered for study in the Sunday-school. These principles of lesson selection, increasingly efficient as the years go by, guarantee to the schools who use the results, as best wisdom of a group of expert Sunday-

school workers both on the Lesson Committee and in practical Sunday-school teaching.

The Home Daily Bible Readings.

Since 1911 a special subcommittee of the Lesson Committee has selected the Home Daily Bible Readings. These may be regarded as a by-product of the Uniform Lessons. These readings, based on the lesson of the following Sunday, and selected from all parts of Holy Writ, are designed to be expositional, illuminative, and devotional. Their popularity and service has led to their adoption as a valuable series of Bible readings, not only in churches, but by societies, by individuals, and by Sunday-school bodies in several foreign countries.

The Committee's Illustrious Chairman.

This survey of the principles of selection of the Uniform Lessons would be defective without mention of the most complete embodiment of them in all the Sunday-school world. The oldest member of the Lesson Committee in point of service (from 1895) is Dr. John R. Sampey, a member of the special Uniform Lesson Committee from and ever since its first appointment, and its chairman for more than twenty years. He has travelled all the stony, rough road through the complex and intricate problems of the last thirty-five years. His unruffled Christian character, his well-balanced tact and judgment, his comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, have been the power behind the throne in preserving the spiritual essentials in the Uniform Lessons as studied in this advancing age.

CHAPTER IV.

The Uniform Lessons in the Light of Modern Educational Theory.

By David R. Piper.

Bible-centered vs. Life-centered Lessons.

The Uniform Lessons have been frequently criticized in the past few years as being Bible-centered lessons, as contrasted with the present-day theory that teaching should be life-centered. We have here, then, two supposedly conflicting pedagogical theories. These two types of teaching, however, ought not to be in conflict, but should supplement each other.

Life-centered teaching was supposedly taken over into religious education from the public school. But no school would attempt to make boys and girls good citizens, or would expect them to face intelligently their present-day problems of citizenship, without teaching them the main facts of American history. Only so could they understand present-day American ideals and tendencies. No one would attempt to make an electrician out of a boy without teaching him what has already been discovered about electricity. The wisdom acquired in the past in any field of knowledge must be mastered by the pupil as a background for further progress. On the other hand, the school must not stop there. It must show the pupils how to use and apply their knowledge.

We Must Teach Both the Bible and Life.

This is all the more true in religion, because in our textbook, the Bible, we have the inspired record of God's past revelations to the human race. This record culminates in the life story of Jesus, the world's Savior. Religious education, if it is to be Christian, must achieve two great aims: It must teach the Bible, so

that pupils will re-discover the inspired teachings of the Word of God; and it must help the pupils to grow spiritually and to become wholehearted, consistent followers of Jesus, capable of living a life of the greatest possible Christian usefulness.

We do not believe, therefore, that Sunday-school lessons should be made either completely life-centered or completely Bible-centered; but that both these elements should enter equally into religious training and that they should be carried along side by side. The Bible should be taught with direct reference to life. The life and conduct of the pupil should be developed in harmony with Bible teaching. Unless these two great factors in religious training are interwoven we shall fall far short of our duty.

The Bible and Life Are at the Heart of Every Uniform Lesson.

We believe that the Uniform Series of lessons lends itself better than any other International series to both these aims. In the first place, every single lesson is based upon a Bible passage, which is not true of some of the Graded Lesson Series. The use of a Bible text in a great many individual lessons of the Graded Series is optional with the publisher, and the present tendency, in some of the Graded Lesson series, is to base more and more lessons upon non-Biblical material, using the Bible merely as a reference book. This method in itself tends to give the impression that the Bible is not authoritative—at least not any more authoritative than some other sources of lesson material. If the Bible is to have the unique place in the pupil's thinking which it ought to have, and if we are to be certain of giving Bible teaching its proper place, we should have a Bible passage as the basis for every lesson. To leave the Bible out, or give it a place subordinate to other lesson material even in twenty per cent of the lessons, is to fall short, by at least twenty per cent, in our duty of transmitting to our boys and girls the revelation that has been handed down to us.

We must keep in mind, too, that the pupil's life is not simply intellectual, social, physical; every boy and girl has a spiritual life. Running through all of his other activities are his spiritual attitudes, his spiritual faith, his moral habits built upon that faith. Therefore any lesson material which develops the spiritual life of the pupil is certainly "life-centered" in as good a sense of the word as if it were helping him solve his more external problems of conduct. This fact seems to be largely overlooked in much of the talk about life-centered teaching.

It is clear then that where the Uniform Lessons are used, the Bible teaching can be given its proper emphasis every Sunday in every lesson; it is also true that these lessons can be applied to the life needs of pupils of all ages.

As indicated by Dr. Ira M. Price, in Chapter 3 of this book, the Uniform Lessons have always aimed at covering all the principal teachings of the Bible every seven years or oftener. Bible passages are selected with this end in view, and since every lesson has a printed Bible text, this conserves one of the two great aims of religious education—that of transmitting the Word of God from generation to generation. It then remains for the lesson helps and all lesson materials to be so prepared that the class members, with the aid of the teacher, can apply the Bible teachings to the needs of their lives. The newer lesson material now furnished on the Uniform Lessons is prepared in this manner, making special application of the Bible teaching to the questions, problems, and experiences of the pupils at each age-period of life.

After all, if our lessons are to minister to the life needs of the pupils and at the same time are to faithfully transmit to them the teachings of the Bible, the place to begin in achieving these two aims is with the selection of Bible texts. For then we can prepare our approach to these Bible texts through the life experience of the pupil. But if we try to build a course of study primarily on the varied interests of the pupil,

it will necessarily be a fragmentary affair, and there can be no guarantee that we can weave into such a course of lessons all the vital elements of the Bible revelation.

Uniform Lessons Have Group-graded Treatment.

With this method of taking the great teachings of the Bible as a basis for a series of lessons, and then applying these teachings to the needs of the growing pupil and to the special experiences and life situations which he faces at each period in his growth, what we really have is a graded lesson treatment. This is not a closely graded treatment, to be sure; that is, we do not attempt, as the Closely Graded Lessons do, to find particular tendencies, interests, and life problems for *each year* of the child's life. In fact, we do not believe that any such sharply marked difference occurs between six-year-olds and seven-year-olds, or between twelve-year-olds and thirteen-year-olds, as to require entirely different lesson treatment. We recognize that growth goes forward by periods. This is both a physiological and a psychological fact. There are periods of rapid physical growth followed by periods of predominant mental development during which the physical body does not enlarge much in size. These alternating periods are well recognized in physiology, and they form the basis for age-groupings in our Sunday-schools, according to departments. In the earlier years growth takes place in approximately three-year cycles. All of the best helps on the Uniform Lessons, therefore, give a graded treatment according to age-groups—Primary (6 to 8), Junior (9 to 11), Intermediate (12 to 14), Senior (15 to 17), Young People (18 to 24), and finally Adults. The Intermediate and Senior lesson material is often the same, because here we have a longer period of time in which certain marked processes are taking place in growth, but no marked changes are completed.

Now if we consider what has been said above, we

shall see how these pedagogical advantages of the Uniform Lessons combine to give them an exceedingly strong position. They conserve the place of the Bible and keep Bible teaching in the forefront in every Sunday's lesson. Then, grading our lesson material so as to make special applications to the experiences and life situations of the pupils in our various departments or age-groups, we teach the Bible so that it meets the needs of growing life at every period.

Uniform Lessons Teach Whole Bible During Every Major Period of Life.

In addition, we cover the main teachings of the Bible every seven years or less. This means that practically all the teachings of the Bible are taught to the growing child, first, with reference to his childhood needs. Then again they are taught with reference to his needs as a developing boy or girl in the adolescent period of life. Again he receives all the great messages of the Bible in their special relation to the problems, opportunities, and life decisions of young manhood and womanhood. And, finally, the Bible is again brought before him as an adult, and its teachings considered with relation to the Christianizing of social, economic, and business life, as well as to the question of consistent, personal Christian living.

Some have objected to this repetition of Bible teaching every few years, and have claimed that it is better to grade Bible teaching more closely, selecting only certain parts for each age-period and spreading them out over a period of seventeen years or more. But if the Bible is the Book of Life, if it contains the life story of the Son of God, if the Christian religion is based upon the revelation of the Holy Scriptures and upon the life and work of Christ as there revealed; then certainly all of the great teachings of religion are needed at every period of growth and change. It is a very strong point in favor of the Uniform Lessons that we do go through the Bible and consider all its principal teachings every seven years or less.

Concerning Difficult Passages.

Before closing this chapter we need to say a word about the claim that some of the Uniform Lesson texts are very difficult to teach young children. This is a fact which we readily admit; yet it all depends on how one attempts to teach the passage. Even some of those passages which are generally regarded as quite simple for the teaching of little children are in reality among the most difficult passages in the Bible. For instance, the greatest Bible scholars have argued and explained and disputed over the meaning of the first chapter of Genesis, and there are questions concerning this chapter on which rival schools of theologians will differ for years to come. Yet a six-year-old child can understand its essential spiritual meaning. In reality what the teacher of Graded Lessons does is to adapt this passage by selecting from it only those things which the child can readily understand, and teaching it in such a way that he can readily understand it. That is precisely what is done with every Uniform Lesson.

When the Graded Lessons were first issued, and for several years thereafter, there was a great deal of hammering at this point. We were told that it was unpedagogical—all wrong—to use any of the more difficult Bible passages in the teaching of children. But the new Graded Lessons for children, as thus far issued, are making use of some of the more difficult Bible passages as reference material. And this introduction of difficult passages is now being defended by some Graded Lesson advocates. For example, Jonathan B. Hawk, writing in *The Elementary Magazine,* February 1929 (page 53), says: "Teachers of children need to spurn the unpedagogical idea that children can learn only simple Bible narratives. The great truths of the Scriptures, the deep principles of Christian conduct, should be so tied up with the child's activities, the projects in which he will share,

the extra-Biblical stories which he hears, that he will come to know them as problems of his daily life."

If this principle applies to the more difficult passages now being used as reference material in the Graded Lessons, it certainly applies equally well to the more difficult passages chosen for use in the Uniform Lessons. In other words, the use of a difficult Bible passage is not unpedagogical, if by right methods of teaching we can apply it to the needs of the pupil.

CHAPTER V.

Practical Advantages of the Uniform Lessons.

By David R. Piper.

We have shown that the Uniform Lessons, when used with the right type of lesson helps, have many pedagogical advantages, both for the faithful teaching of the Bible and the faithful development of Christian character and conduct. In addition there are many practical considerations in their favor, which go far to account for their present popularity.

Uniform Lessons Best Adapted to Small Schools.

In the first place, it is generally recognized that no matter what the virtues of the Closely Graded Lessons may be, it is quite difficult to use them successfully in the small and average-size Sunday-schools; and the vast majority of Sunday-schools in the United States and Canada are schools of less than one hundred members. This is not said in criticism, but as a statement of a fact, acknowledged even by those who advocate Graded Lessons. For example, in a pamphlet entitled, "Lesson Courses for Sunday-schools," published by the General Sunday-school Board of the M. E. Church, South, in December, 1929, this statement appeared on page 11:

> A large majority of the Sunday-schools in our denomination are comparatively small, having an average enrollment of less than one hundred. Such schools do not have enough pupils to justify classes graded by single years. . . . When the Closely Graded Lessons were issued, many of the smaller schools tried to use them. However, these courses called for such a multiplicity of classes and such a large number of teachers that they were found largely unsuited for use in the small school.

As indicated in this same pamphlet, this particular difficulty of the number of classes may be met by the use of either the Uniform Lessons or the Group Graded Lessons; although the latter are not as yet issued for all departments of the Sunday-school.

The Teacher Problem Solved.

However, just as in the Closely Graded Lessons one must have seventeen or more different classes, all studying different lessons; so with the Group Graded Lessons (when they have been completed for all age-groups) one must have at least six different lessons being taught in the school at the same time. This creates, though to a somewhat lesser degree, the same difficulties in regard to teachers which one meets in trying to use the Closely Graded Lessons. Each teacher must use a different set of lessons, since the lessons are different for each age-group. There are few teachers who are not sometimes absent from their classes. If the Closely Graded Lessons are used there must not only be at least seventeen teachers using seventeen different sets of lessons, but each teacher must have an assistant teacher, who will be familiar with the particular course being taught and be ready to step in as a substitute when the regular teacher is absent. Similarly, when the Group Graded Lessons are used, for every teacher there must be a substitute teacher, prepared to teach that particular set of lessons.

This practical difficulty is not so likely to be felt in a large school where there are plenty of workers available; but there are few small schools that can provide teachers and substitute teachers enough to properly man their classes; certainly for the use of the Closely Graded Lessons. This difficulty is overcome by the use of the Uniform Lessons, since all classes are studying the same lesson text each Sunday, the material being adapted by special lesson helps and teaching methods to the needs of the various classes. Thus it is possible to secure substitute teachers from among the classes of older young people and adults.

PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF THE UNIFORM LESSONS.

Uniform Lessons Promote Family Religion.

While speaking of the family in its relation to religious education, it may be well to emphasize here another point, which is that the Uniform Lessons have made possible in the past a high degree of family cooperation with the Sunday-school and of family unity in religious training. The use of the one lesson text makes it possible for all the members of the family to read the Bible lesson together and to discuss together its meanings for the family group as a whole, as well as for each member in the family individually. Not only so, but the Home Daily Bible Readings, provided in connection with the Uniform Lessons, have been a very vital factor in family religion. Pastors and educators are waking up today to the fact that the Sunday-school and church must do all within their power to preserve the family as a religious institution, and to increase the interest of the family as such in the religious life. There can be no question that all the secular influences of modern life tend to take the various members of the family apart from each other, to develop strong interests outside the group, and so weaken family ties. The religious tie in family life is the most vital of all ties. It must be preserved at all cost; hence, the fact that the Uniform Lessons enable the Sunday-school to minister to the needs of family religion in a way that is possible by no other lesson system, is a strong point in favor of their use.

Uniform Lessons Suit Needs of the Masses.

In an article in the *International Journal* for January, 1930 (page 15), Dr. Benjamin S. Winchester made some remarks about adults who use the Uniform Lessons, which it may be well for us to consider here, since they lead us to another point in favor of these lessons. He said that "there is a hint of standardization conveyed by the adjective uniform," and that the Uniform Lessons would seem to appeal chiefly to the kind of person who depends upon patent medicines and who wears ready-made clothing.

Apparently Dr. Winchester was trying to be slightly ironical. But we accept the irony because it stands for a practical consideration of the first importance. To be sure, very few people depend entirely upon patent medicines to cure all their illnesses; and, similarly, nobody depends entirely upon the Uniform Lessons for all of his religion. But probably ninety-five per cent of the people of the United States do make some use of high-grade standardized proprietary medicines. The doctors themselves nowadays use standardized products (proprietary medicines), to a large extent, instead of making up their own medicines as the old family doctors formerly did. The very fact that a good proprietary medicine is standardized constitutes the strongest reason for using it. The physician knows that the exact proportion of the various drugs is maintained in the proprietary medicine, and that they are more dependable than those he might mix himself, without the accurate facilities of a large laboratory. And this is one essential reason, and a very good one, why the great majority of people find the Uniform Lessons satisfactory in contrast to special elective courses of various kinds for adults, and comparatively new and untried lesson courses for younger pupils, the material for which is still undergoing change and experimentation.

As for ready-made clothing, this is but a further illustration of the same principle. To be sure, there are some people who are physically so constructed that they cannot wear ready-made clothes. Likewise there are doubtless some people who are so unusual in their religious and spiritual lives that they need special attention. The Uniform Lessons, taking as they do the great truths of the Bible and faithfully presenting them from week to week, might not satisfy these people. There is undoubtedly justification in a good many Sunday-schools for special classes for certain groups which have specialized interests or needs. But the Uniform Lessons still remain the standard for the majority, just because they do suit the requirements of

the majority for a downright study and application of the Word of God to the needs of the personal religious life.

In a Time of Experimentation, Uniform Lessons Are Safest.

It is right that the mass of Sunday-school workers should have a natural conservatism about adopting new courses of lessons. They feel that the welfare of the pupils in their care demands that they should be, if necessary, a little behind the times, rather than jump too quickly into new material that may prove not to give the best spiritual and moral results. Experiments in new lesson courses are desirable for achieving certain special purposes. Experiment, however, not only takes time, but new courses must be tested out over a period of years before anyone, however expert, can state with certainty what their flaws and good points may be. As most readers know, at the time this is being written and published (1930) the Closely Graded Lessons are undergoing a thorough rewriting. This is still in process, although some of the courses for children are now finished and off the press. These new lessons are still in the experimental stage. The question naturally arises why the Graded Lessons should need to be completely rewritten. We do not feel that we should attempt to answer this question ourselves; but it may be well here to quote from a frank and cautiously written article by Hazel A. Lewis, well-known Graded Lesson expert. This article appeared in *The Front Rank* for July 28, 1929 (page 585) under the title, "What Is Back of the New Graded Lesson Courses?" Miss Lewis stated that "during the twenty years that the International Graded Lessons have been in use, the materials for teachers and pupils have been rewritten at least twice and have had frequent revision . . . But there comes a time when revision is not sufficient and it is necessary to face the question of changing the entire plan or outline."

Uniform Lessons Have Met the Test of Time.

It may be true that the Uniform Lesson texts selected are sometimes very difficult for certain age-groups, but over against this we have the fact that the Bible is at the heart of every Uniform Lesson; that all the great teachings of the Bible are presented through the Uniform Lessons to our pupils every seven years or oftener; and, above all, that the Uniform Lessons, through a long period of testing, have helped to produce some of the finest generations of Christian young people that the world has ever known. It was in the decade following the introduction of the Uniform Lessons into the Sunday-schools of America that the Christian Endeavor Movement was launched, and in its wake many other world-wide movements of Christian young people sprang up. It was the Uniform Lesson System, with its quarterly temperance lessons and its faithful teaching of the Word of God Sunday after Sunday that produced the generation of Christian young people of America, who later brought about the national prohibition of the liquor traffic. Home and foreign missions enjoyed their greatest expansion during the period when the Uniform Lessons were alone in the field. The Bible classes of America, studying the Uniform Lessons, have added tremendously to the power of the Christian church, and out of the men's Bible classes have grown the men's brotherhood movements and the "men and religion" movements of the past few decades.

Uniform Lessons Bring the Bible to the Unchurched.

Finally, it is possible by means of the Uniform Lessons to keep the Bible and its teachings as a live issue before the great masses of the American people, churched and unchurched. For years the majority of newspapers in our smaller towns and cities, and in some of our large metropolitan centers, have published weekly expositions on the Uniform Sunday-school Lessons. Our weekly church papers, almost without exception, treat the Uniform Lessons, as do many other

weekly and monthly journals. By this means Bible reading and Bible study have been brought to the unchurched masses, and given a great impetus even among church people. No one can begin to compute the numbers of people who have been led to thoughtful consideration of the religious life and to definite acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour through this widespread, popular use of the Uniform Lessons.

This has also acted as an undergirding for all the work in the consciousness of the vast majority of the American people. The fact that editors of great papers give serious consideration to the Uniform Sunday-school Lessons has created an atmosphere of popular opinion favorable to the Sunday-school. All this has made it easier for the Sunday-schools to recruit new members, to enlist active workers, to keep up the morale of their workers, and in general to carry on successfully.

If the time should ever come when the majority of Sunday-schools should cease using the Uniform Lessons in most of their classes and departments, the newspapers and magazines would necessarily cease giving attention to the Uniform Lessons, because they would no longer have "news value." It would be impossible for newspapers and periodicals to publish expositions of Bible passages on any other International Series of lessons, since the only other International Series are either Closely Graded or Group Graded and therefore lesson comments would have to be furnished on a great variety of lesson texts each week, if on any at all. Many thoughtful people see in this fact alone a practical reason why Sunday-schools should stand by the Uniform Lessons and continue using them.

A Word in Conclusion.

There is no perfect lesson system. There never will be. It is a great deal like planning a house. One cannot have everything. Make the best plans you will

and there is something you would like to have in your house that you have had to leave out. In planning a house, therefore, one selects the plan that will give him the greatest possible number of advantages and will make his house the most livable over a long period of years. Something similar applies to this matter of selecting lessons for the Sunday-school. No matter what decision one makes, there are some advantages which must be given up and which one may find in other lesson systems. We believe that the Uniform Lesson System offers the greatest number of practical and spiritual advantages; perhaps not for every Sunday-school, but for the majority of Sunday-schools, and that it has stood best the greatest and most trying tests. The majority of Sunday-school people will therefore continue to use the Uniform Lessons for a long time to come.

In speaking about the difficulty of using the present Graded Lessons in the average Sunday-school, Dr. Walter S. Athearn, one of the greatest authorities on religious education in America, says in *The Lookout* of November 17, 1929:

"The small school is almost completely ignored. A completely graded lesson system unadapted to small schools is pushed upon the small school with a fervent exhortation to try a "cycle" adaptation of the "big" school system. The "cycle" system has failed because the basic principles of educational administration have been ignored. In curricula, in leadership, in supervision and administration the small schools have been neglected. We are a people of small schools in small churches. So far as I have been able to learn, we are doing little or nothing to solve the educational problems peculiar to the schools in our churches."

CHAPTER VI.

The Lessons for 1931 and Future Years.

By David R. Piper.

As indicated by Dr. Ira M. Price and Dr. John R. Sampey, in Chapters 2 and 3, the Uniform Lesson System has not been static and unchanging. On the contrary, it has been subject to constant study and criticism by the ablest Bible scholars, educational leaders, and practical Sunday-school workers. The result has been frequent, in fact, almost continuous, improvement in the work of the International Uniform Lesson Committee. This Committee officially represents forty-one coöperating denominations, and its work is unofficially accepted and used by practically all other protestant religious groups.

It is the almost universal consensus of opinion that the present series of lessons are among the best ever issued. Here, for example, is a statement from the *Reformed Church Messenger* of December 26, 1929 (page 5), which is typical of statements found in a great many Sunday-school journals and church periodicals:

"Those who have studied the Uniform Lessons during the last few years must certainly have noted the tremendous improvement in the selection of material, as well as in the comprehensive and well-considered plans for the years ahead. . . . We are glad to take this opportunity to felicitate our Church Schools on the greatly improved character of the Uniform Sunday School Lessons, which continue to be studied by the great majority who attend our Church Schools. . . . This is not simply our own opinion, but it expresses the judgment of many leaders of our own and other communions."

The present cycle of lessons closes with the year 1931, and we shall reproduce at the conclusion of this

chapter a complete outline of lesson titles and texts for that year. This outline will show a distinctly evangelistic aim running through the entire year's lessons. These lessons challenge our Sunday-schools and churches everywhere to make the year 1931 a great Pentecostal year—a year of unusual emphasis upon winning our pupils not only to a definite decision for Christ, but definitely to the Christian way of life.

The recently enlarged Uniform Lesson Committee, still with its veteran chairman, Dr. John R. Sampey, at the helm, is now at work on the new five-year cycle of Improved Uniform Lessons, which will run through the years 1932-1936, inclusive. As projected, these lessons are quite generally regarded as marking the highest peak yet reached in the selection of Uniform Lesson texts.

Concerning the general plan and the titles of the series we cannot do better than to quote from the official statement of the Committee, as follows:

The Committee has sought still further to improve the Uniform Lessons by providing occasional topical courses. These topical courses are designed in general to provide surveys of important Biblical truth and discussions of important aspects of Christian living, gaining light from all parts of the Bible, and systematizing more carefully and thoroughly than is possible in a series exclusively chronological.

The Improved Uniform Lessons for 1932-36 constitute a five-year cycle. Four important and interesting topical courses are offered: "Studies in the Christian Life," "Some Great Christian Teachings," "Christian Standards of Life," and "Some Representative Men and Women of the Bible." There are studies in each of the four Gospels: three months being given to John, six months to Mark, six months to Matthew, and six months to Luke. Besides, the course of three months on "The Life and Letters of Peter" furnishes a rapid survey of the Gospels. The Acts and the Epistles are studied three times, once in the three months on "The Life and Letters of Peter," once in the three months on

"The Life and Letters of Paul," and again in the six months on "The Spread of Christianity," which includes the Revelation. It will be noted further that this cycle of studies is not allowed at any time to get far from the central theme of all our Bible study, the life of the world's Redeemer and its extension in the history of the early church. The five-year cycle is as follows:

January-March, 1932.	The Message of the Gospel According to John.
April-June, 1932.	Messages from Genesis.
July-September, 1932.	The Era of Moses.
October-December, 1932.	Christian Standards of Life.
January-June, 1933.	The Gospel of the Son of God: Studies in Mark.
July-September, 1933.	Some Early Leaders of Israel: From Joshua to Solomon.
October-December, 1933.	Life and Letters of Paul.
January-June, 1934.	The Gospel of the Kingdom: Studies in Matthew.
July-September, 1934.	The Early Prophets and Kings of Israel: From Ahijah to Isaiah.
October-December, 1934.	Studies in the Christian Life.
January-March, 1935.	Life and Letters of Peter.
April-June, 1935.	Some Great Christian Teachings.
July-September, 1935.	Some Representative Men and Women of the Bible.
October-December, 1935.	Later Prophets and Leaders of Judah: From Isaiah to Malachi.
January-June, 1936.	Jesus, the World's Saviour: Studies in Luke.

July-December, 1936.	The Spread of Christianity: Studies in the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation.

All present indications are that the Improved Uniform Lessons will continue to be used in every Sunday-school now using them. Not only so, but the unusually good selection of Uniform Lesson Courses for the coming years, and the widespread approval of them on the part of many leaders, will result in a return to the Uniform Lesson fold on the part of a considerable number of classes that have been experimenting with special courses of study. The next few years will be the best in Uniform Lesson history, we firmly believe. We also believe that the present decade will witness a marked revival of interest in the Sunday-school and in good old-fashioned Bible study with special reference to the needs of our present age. In this revival the Uniform Lessons are destined to play a larger part than any other single factor. We hope for the readers of this book a full and glorious share in the Christian achievements of the Sunday-school during the years to come.

APPENDIX.

The International Sunday School Lessons Improved Uniform Series 1931.

Issued by the International Sunday School Lesson Committee.

First Quarter.

Jesus the World's Savior. Studies in Luke.

(First Half of a Six-months' Course.)

AIM: A study of the life, teachings, and saving ministry of Jesus as recorded in the gospel of Luke, in order to inspire and guide the pupil to accept him, as

Saviour and Lord; to enter into increasing fellowship with him, to bear effective witness to his saving and transforming power; to follow his example and manifest his spirit in life and service.

1. *January 4.*—Title—*The Birth of John the Baptist.*
   Lesson—Luke 1. *Print*—Luke 1: 8-17, 80.
2. *January 11.*—Title—*The Childhood of Jesus.*
   Lesson—Luke 2. *Print*—Luke 2: 40-52.
3. *January 18.*—Title—*The Ministry of John the Baptist.*
   Lesson—Luke 3. *Print*—Luke 3: 7-17.
4. *January 25.*—Title—*Jesus Tempted.*
   Lesson—Luke 3: 21—4: 30. *Print*—Luke 4: 1-13.
5. *February 1.*—Title—*Jesus the Great Physician.*
   Lesson—Luke 4: 31—5: 39. *Print*—Luke 4: 38-44; 5: 12-16.
6. *February 8.*—Title—*Jesus the World's Teacher.*
   Lesson—Luke 6. *Print*—Luke 6: 27-42.
7. *February 15.*—Title—*Jesus the Friend of Sinners.*
   Lesson—Luke 7. *Print*—Luke 7: 36-50.
8. *February 22.*—Title—*Jesus Bearing the Good Tidings.*
   Lesson—Luke 8. *Print*—Luke 8: 1-15.
9. *March 1.*—Title—*Jesus Sending Forth Missionaries.*
   Lesson—Luke 9: 1—10: 24. *Print*—Luke 10: 1-11, 17, 21, 22.
10. *March 8.*—Title—*The Good Samaritan.*
    Lesson—Luke 10: 25-37. *Print*—Luke 10: 25-37.
11. *March 15.*—Title—*Jesus among Friends and Foes.*
    Lesson—Luke 10: 38—11: 54. *Print*—Luke 10: 38-42; 11: 42-46, 52-54.
12. *March 22.*—Title—*The Use and Abuse of God's Gifts. (Temperance Lesson.)*
    Lesson—Luke 12. *Print*—Luke 12: 16-21, 41-48.
13. *March 29.*—Title—*Review: Jesus the World's Saviour: Preparation and Popularity.*

Second Quarter.

Jesus the World's Savior. Studies in Luke.

(Second Half of a Six-months' Course.)

1. *April 5.*—Title—*Easter Lesson: The Resurrection.*
   Lesson—1 Corinthians 15: 1-8, 50-58. *Print*—1 Corinthians 15: 1-8, 50-58.
2. *April 12.*—Title—*The Prodigal Son.*

Lesson—Luke 15. *Print*—Luke 15: 11-24.

3. *April 19.*—Title—*The Rich Man and Lazarus.*
   Lesson—Luke 16: 1—17: 37. *Print*—Luke 16: 19-31.
4. *April 26.*—Title—*How to Pray.*
   Lesson—Luke 18. *Print*—Luke 18: 1-14.
5. *May 3.*—Title—*Jesus in the Home of Zacchæus.*
   Lesson—Luke 19: 1-10. *Print*—Luke 19: 1-10.
6. *May 10.*—Title—*The Parable of the Pounds.*
   Lesson—Luke 19: 11-26. *Print*—Luke 19: 11-26.
7. *May 17.*—Title—*Jesus Enters Jerusalem as King.*
   Lesson—Luke 19: 28—20: 47. *Print*—Luke 19: 29-42, 45-48.
8. *May 24.*—Title—*Jesus Preparing for the End.*
   Lesson—Luke 21: 1—22: 23. *Print*—Luke 22: 7-23.
9. *May 31.*—Title—*Jesus in Gethsemane.*
   Lesson—Luke 22: 24-71. *Print*—Luke 22: 39-54.
10. *June 7.*—Title—*Jesus Crucified.*
    Lesson—Luke 23. *Print*—Luke 23: 33-46.
11. *June 14.*—Title—*The Resurrection and the Ascension.*
    Lesson—Luke 24. *Print*—Luke 24: 25-40, 50, 51.
12. *June 21.*—Title—*The Sin of Causing Others to Stumble. (Temperance Lesson.)*
    Lesson—Romans 14: 13-23. *Print*—Romans 14: 13-23.
13. *June 28.*—Title—*Review: Jesus the World's Saviour: Suffering and Sovereignty.*

Third Quarter.

The Spread of Christianity.

Studies in The Acts, The Epistles, and The Revelation.

(First Half of a Six-months' Course.)

AIM: To lead the pupil to an understanding of primitive Christianity, and to beget in him the desire and purpose to live the Christian life and to win others to faith in the Lord Jesus.

1. *July 5.*—Title—*The Gift of the Holy Spirit.*
   Lesson—Acts 1: 6-14; 2: 1-47. *Print*—Acts 1: 6-9; 2: 1-8.
2. *July 12.*—Title—*The Preaching of the Apostles.*
   Lesson—Acts 3: 1—4: 31; 1 Corinthians 1: 21-25. *Print*—Acts 4: 1-14.
3. *July 19.*—Title—*Social Service in the Early Church.*

Lesson—Acts 4: 32-35; 6: 1-7; 9: 36-39; 2 Corinthians 9: 1-15. *Print*—Acts 4: 32-35; 6: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 9: 1-7.

4. *July 26.*—Title—*Christianity Spread by Persecution.*
   Lesson—Acts 7: 54—8: 4; 11: 19-21; 26: 9-11; 1 Peter 4: 12-19. *Print*—Acts 7: 59—8: 4; 11: 19-21.
5. *August 2.*—Title—*Philip's Missionary Labors.*
   Lesson—Acts 8: 5-40. *Print*—Acts 8: 26-40.
6. *August 9.*—Title—*Saul Converted and Commissioned.*
   Lesson—Acts 9: 1-31; 22: 3-21; Galatians 1: 11-17; 1 Timothy 1: 12-17. *Print*—Acts 9: 1-9, 17-19; 1 Timothy 1: 12-14.
7. *August 16.*—Title—*Sowing and Reaping. (Temperance Lesson.)*
   Lesson—Galatians 6: 1-10. *Print*—Galatians 6: 1-10.
8. *August 23.*—Title—*A Gospel for All Men.*
   Lesson—Acts 10: 1—11: 18; 1 Corinthians 1: 23-25. *Print*—Acts 11: 5-18.
9. *August 30.*—Title—*The Mission to Cyprus.*
   Lesson—Acts 12: 25—13: 12. *Print*—Acts 12: 25—13: 12.
10. *September 6.*—Title—*Turning to the Gentiles.*
    Lesson—Acts 13: 13-52; Romans 1: 14-16; 11: 1-24. *Print*—Acts 13: 42-52; Romans 1: 14-16.
11. *September 13.*—Title—*Some Missionary Experiences.*
    Lesson—Acts 14; Ephesians 6: 10-20. *Print*—Acts 14: 8-23.
12. *September 20.*—Title—*The Council in Jerusalem.*
    Lesson—Acts 15: 1-35; Galatians 2. *Print*—Acts 15: 22-29; Galatians 2: 1, 2, 9, 10.
13. *September 27.*—Title—*Review: The Spread of Christianity in Asia.*

Fourth Quarter.

The Spread of Christianity.
Studies in The Acts, The Epistles, and The Revelation.

(Second Half of a Six-months' Course.)

1. *October 4.*—Title—*The Macedonian Call.*
   Lesson—Acts 15: 36—16: 15; Romans 15: 18-21. *Print*—Acts 16: 6-15; Romans 15: 18-21.
2. *October 11.*—Title—*Paul in Philippi.*
   Lesson—Acts 16: 16-40; Philippians 4: 4-9.

Print—Acts 16: 22-34; Philippians 4: 4-7.

3. *October 18.*—Title—*Paul in Thessalonica and Berea.*
   Lesson—Acts 17: 1-15; 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12. *Print*—Acts 17: 1, 5-11; 1 Thessalonians 2: 7-12.
4. *October 25.*—Title—*Paul in Corinth.*
   Lesson—Acts 18: 1-17; 1 Corinthians 13. *Print*—Acts 18: 1-11.
5. *November 1.*—Title—*World's Temperance Sunday.*
   Lesson—Galatians 5: 13-26; Romans 13: 1-14. *Print*—Galatians 5: 13-26.
6. *November 8.*—Title—*Paul in Ephesus.*
   Lesson—Acts 19; Ephesians 5: 5-11. *Print*—Acts 19: 8-20.
7. *November 15.*—Title—*Paul in Jerusalem.*
   Lesson—Acts 21: 17—23: 30. *Print*—Acts 21: 27-39.
8. *November 22.*—Title—*Paul in Rome.*
   Lesson—Acts 25: 1-12; 28: 16-30. *Print*—Acts 28: 16-24, 30, 31.
9. *November 29.*—Title—*Paul's Letter to Philemon.*
   Lesson—Philemon. *Print*—Philemon 4-20.
10. *December 6.*—Title—*Rome and Beyond.*
    Lesson—Romans 15: 22-29; 2 Timothy 4: 6-18; Titus 1: 5-16; 3: 11-14. *Print*—2 Timothy 4: 6-18.
11. *December 13.*—Title—*John's Vision on Patmos.*
    Lesson—Revelation 1: 1—3: 22. *Print*—Revelation 1: 4-18.
12. *December 20.*—Title—*The Supreme Gift of Love. (Christmas Lesson.)*
    Lesson—1 John 4: 7-19. *Print*—1 John 4: 7-19.
13. *December 27.*—Title—*Review: The Spread of Christianity in Europe.*

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